

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-34 (canceled)

35. (original) A process of preparing 2-hydroxy-2-methyl-3-(4-fluorophenylthio) propionic acid, comprising the steps of:

- a) preparing a solution of 4-fluorothiophenol in methanol;
- b) adding methyl-1,2-epoxy-2-methyl propionate to form a mixture;
- c) adding ethyl acetate to the mixture; and
- d) recovering 2-hydroxy-2-methyl-3-(4-fluorophenylthio) propionic acid.

36. (original) The process according to claim 35, wherein the preparation of 4-fluorothiophenol solution is performed by adding a basic solution under N₂ flow.

37. (original) The process according to claim 36, wherein the basic solution is selected from the group consisting of sodium hydroxide and potassium hydroxide.

38. (original) The process according to claim 37, wherein the sodium hydroxide has a concentration of 2 N.

39. (original) The process according to claim 35, wherein the mixture is formed by stirring.

40. (original) The process according to claim 39, wherein the stirring is performed at room temperature for 90 minutes.

41. (original) The process according to claim 35, wherein the recovering step is extraction.

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42. (original) The process according to claim 41, wherein the extraction is achieved by chloroform.

43. (original) The process according to claim 35, wherein the recovering step further involves solidifying 2-hydrox-2-methyl-3-(4-fluorophenylthio) propionic acid.

Claims 44-49 (canceled)